

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE

September 11, 2001

Minutes

Member Present:

HARJA, John – GOPB/DNR
SCHLOTTHAUER, Bill - Water Rights
WRIGHT, Carolyn - GOPB/DNR
DANIELS, Ronald – DOGM
AUSTIN, Lloyd - DWRe
SOWARDS, Glade – NR/ADMIN
GUNNELL, Roy - UDAF
GRUBAUGH-LITTIG, Pam - DOGM
CARTER, Kevin - SITLA
HARTY, Kimm – UGS
DUANE, Mortensen - DERR
LANDURETH, Brenda - DNR/ADMIN
CANNING, Michael - DWR
PITKIN, Jay – DEQ – Water Quality
TRIMMER, Edie – DFFSL
LANDURETH, Brenda – DNR

Others Present:

BUNNELL, Dwight – DWR (Guest)

I. Approval of Minutes

Bill Schlotthauer called the meeting to order at approximately 9:08 a.m. Kimm Harty, requested her name be added to the list of Committee members present for the August 14, 2001 meeting. Jay Pitkin made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Lloyd Austin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Discussions

Gunnison Sage Grouse Conservation Easement – Dwight Bunnell, DWR

Sage grouse numbers have been declining due to habitat loss and land conversion from sagebrush-steppe to roads, agricultural land uses and other infrastructure. A small limited population is in Southeast Utah (San Juan County Conservation Area) and another small population is in southwest Colorado. The Gunnison sage grouse is on the Utah State Sensitive Species List and is a candidate for Federal listing by the USFWS. Landowners and conservation community in Utah are concerned about the Gunnison sage grouse and have formed the San Juan County Gunnison Sage Grouse Working Group and are initiating an action plan for management of this species (San Juan County Gunnison Sage Grouse Conservation Plan).

The lek or strutting ground is the center of activity for the sage grouse and are critical for habitat protection. A gas pipeline is located adjacent to the subject lek and has

raised some concerns. Funding became available for a conservation easement on private land and negotiations with the landowner resulted in protection of the strutting grounds. The landowner would like to close this project by October 1, 2001. DWR requested an expedited review from RDCC.

The Williams Pipeline Company, the Endangered Species Mitigation Fund, San Juan County commission, San Juan County Gunnison Sage Grouse Work Group, USFWS, TNC, DWR and the family will make substantial contributions. This is a great opportunity to protect the lek. The landowner has been very involved and supportive.

June 8, DWR met with the county commissioners to review this project. Dry land farm conversion has reduced available habitat. The Gunnison Sage Grouse is described as a separate species.

Kevin Carter moved to accept expedited review of this proposal. Edie Trimmer seconded the motion. The committee approved the motion unanimously. Some concerns were expressed regarding the listing of both species of sage grouse range wide.

III. Report from Agencies on Any Anticipated Projects

Single-Point Energy Permitting Committee

Williams Pipeline is proposing to supply gas by laying a parallel pipeline to the existing one that leads into Kern County, California. They hope to start construction in May of 2002. The DEIS will be presented to RDCC in mid-November and they intend to make a presentation to the committee. Bill asked opinions on an automatic expedited review for projects that come before the Single Point Energy Permitting Committee. This would cut the review time in half from 30 to 60 days down to 15 to 30 days. Williams Pipeline hopes to deliver gas to the county a year from September.

The committee discussed and decided to have expedited reviews on a case-by-case basis. The project sponsors will request an expedited review when the project is submitted, but the committee mentioned that the project must be listed on the agenda. The DEIS is where RDCC initiates review of these items. Notices, scoping and the DEIS is the usual process.

Sonja Wallace is coordinating the pre-design conferences for streamlining permitting requirements.

IV. Review of Proposed Items as Listed on the Project Management Library

The following projects were briefly mentioned:

Bear Lake dredging and Cache Valley water delivery concerns.

Expedited review from Trust Lands on the Range Improvement Project (147).

Several oil, gas drilling permits
Brine shrimp harbors
Zion Park Fire Plan

Wasatch-Cache Forest Plan comment deadline to GOPB is October 15, however DNR deadline is October 9 to Glade Sowards and Thomas Brill.

Other Business

Kathleen is leaving DNR to work as the BLM director.

John and Carolyn will function in the same manner regarding comments. RDCC is to continue business as usual. Proposed responses and other RDCC comments will be coordinated in the governor's office and DNR Administration will coordinate DNR related comments. Agencies within DNR should send comments and priority items to Glade Sowards and Thomas Brill.

Computer support systems are still not functioning. Access to the network and the regular methods of communication have been difficult. Carolyn and John are the staff support. We are trying to cut back on the paper.

John Harja is sending a letter to David Howell, BLM to request that the state have cooperating status on issues in the BLM plan for the Uinta Basin. DNR and RDCC will have comments on oil and gas, wildlife and other issues. BLM will also be working on the San Juan Area, Vernal, southeast Utah, Richfield, southwest. They will be conducting these planning efforts by districts.

Eddie Trimmer will be leaving to work at the Lone Peak Nursery.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.